

# The Anderson County Democratic Women's Club News

February 2026

## ***A Deep Dive into the Soul of the Manhattan Project with Katara Vasquez***

**5:30 pm potluck – 6:00 pm presentation**

Oak Ridge Civic Center – Rec Center Social Hall (1401 Oak Ridge Turnpike, Oak Ridge, TN 37830)

Come at 5:30 on **Wednesday, February 25<sup>th</sup>**, for potluck dinner and conversation - the talk will begin promptly at 6:00.

We will learn about the often-overlooked contributions of African Americans to the Manhattan Project during World War II. Blending personal narrative with rigorous historical context, Atomic Hope founder Katara Vasquez explores how hope functioned as a unifying force—transcending racial and cultural barriers during one of the most complex moments in American history. We will gain insight into inclusive historical storytelling and practical strategies for fostering unity through shared understanding.

Award-winning author and environmental scientist Katara Vasquez is passionate about revealing the contributions of the historically unknown in our shared American history to connect and inspire. A Tuskegee University alumni, Katara now lives in Oak Ridge where she spent over 20 years safeguarding America's historic spaces. Her career has earned her multiple honors, including recognition by the State of Tennessee Historical Commission and the Secretary of the Department of Energy.



Through her engaging children's books, *Atomic Hope: Our Words and Our Spaces: A STEAM Travel Guide*, *Josie's Hope: A Secret City Revealed*, and her new release, *Making A Little Red Wagon*, she connects history, STEM, and storytelling to spark wonder and imagination. What began as a mother's effort to help her children see themselves in local American history has developed into a dynamic heritage education, consulting, and tourism business. She is the President of Atomic Hope LLC, where her company is dedicated to bridging historic stewardship with modern solutions. She is also the owner of Prolific by Design, a boutique publishing house dedicated to amplifying diverse voices. Most importantly, she's a proud mom on a mission to inspire people, especially kids everywhere, to see their own potential and learn from the pages of our shared American story.

## **Future ACDWC Events**

**April 18th 2025** – The Tennessee Federation of Democratic Women will have the 68<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention here in Oak Ridge. If you are a TFDW member you are invited to attend the meeting as one of our five delegates. This is a great way to connect with like minded women from across the state and guide the organization into its future. Please contact Ann Miller or Ann Mostoller if you would like to attend.

---

## **Other Events**

**Wednesday February 11th** – The TN General Assembly is back in session, and it is time for the next Stand-Up Oak Ridge event to support Planned Parenthood. TAPP is planning a joint party with the new college student group RSCC Generation Action. They will meet at the RSCC Oak Ridge campus to write postcards to elected representatives supporting reproductive rights. And pack gift bags with condoms for students in advance of Valentine's day.

**February 18<sup>th</sup>** – Join the **Anderson Dems General Assembly** to learn what's on the ballot, share ideas, and turn community energy into action This event will be at the Roane State Community College (City Room) on Wednesday Feb 18<sup>th</sup> at 6:30pm. Register at <https://www.andersoncountymunicipalparty.com/events/assembly-feb26>.

**March 17th** – Randy Hemann, Manager of City of Oak Ridge will speak to the League of Women Voters on the "State of the City of Oak Ridge." Also, April 7<sup>th</sup> to hear from Dave Clark about Anderson County, and May 2<sup>nd</sup> to hear from Dr. Bruce Borchers. The League meetings are held at the Oak Ridge Unitarian Universalist Church – lunch at 11:30 and the meeting at 12:00.

**Saturday March 28<sup>th</sup>** – No Kings Rally in Oak Ridge. Mark your calendars and ready your signs!

## **Upcoming Public Meetings:**

**Oak Ridge:** View meeting schedules and agendas for [Oak Ridge](#)

Please check the website for Oak Ridge meetings as some locations might be different due to on-going construction at the Municipal Building complex.

**City Council Regular Meeting**, 7 pm 2nd Monday of month, Municipal Building Courtroom

**Municipal Planning Commission**, 5:30 pm 3rd Thursday of month, Oak Ridge Municipal Courtroom

**Traffic Safety Advisory Board**, 7 pm 3rd Monday of month, Central Services Complex Conf Room

**Disability Advisory Board**, 11 am 3rd Monday of Month, Senior Center

**Land Bank Board of Directors**, 8:30 am 3rd Tuesday of month, Municipal Building Courtroom.

**Recreation and Parks Advisory Board**, 7 pm 2nd Thursday of month, Civic Center Social Room

**Board of Education**, 5 pm 4th Monday of month, Board Room - School Admin Bldg (304 New York Ave.) <https://www.ortn.edu/central-office/board-of-education/members-schedule/>

**Anderson County:** View meeting schedules and agendas for [Anderson County](#).

**Anderson County Commission Meeting**, 6:30 pm Tuesday February 17th, Anderson County Courthouse Rm 312.

**Anderson County Election Commission**, 4:00 pm Thursday Feb 12<sup>th</sup> Anderson County Municipal Building Rm 118A. (100 North Main Street, Clinton, TN 37716)

**Anderson County Library Board**, 5:30 pm Thurs Feb 12th at Anderson County Courthouse Rm 312.

### **Club Updates**

**Voter Registrations:** Over 2,300 voters have been purged from the roles. You can check your registration by contacting the Anderson County Election Commission or verifying your data via the state website <https://tnmap.tn.gov/voterlookup>.

**The Helen Jernigan Memorial Scholarship** is a competitive scholarship available to Democratic leaning Anderson County high school women who are planning on furthering their education. If you have someone in mind let Ann Mostoller know.

#### **Make a Difference:**

The club needs help with the Fundraising Committee. Please contact Ann Mostoller if you would like to learn more.

---

### **January Meeting Summary**

#### **January Meeting Summary: Why Healthcare Costs are Going Up with Derrick Johnson and Ebony Capshaw**

1-27-2026 at the Oak Ridge Library Auditorium

Derrick spoke to the group about health insurance costs and the emerging pressures driving prices, what's changing in the healthcare environment, and how we can make more informed choices for ourselves and our families.

He noted that a lot of people get their health insurance through their employers, and employers want their employees to take advantage of their benefits and stay healthy and productive. Insured America, in essence, subsidizes uninsured Americans because the providers want to recoup their costs by transferring the burden to insurance, which then drives up costs of premiums and copays.

Large provider networks can negotiate for better reimbursement rates, which then decreases profits for insurance companies, and ultimately increases costs of the premiums and copays. Medicare tightly controls reimbursements. The premium for Medicare is taken directly from subscribers' Social Security payment, which reduces administrative costs. One thing to watch for as people approach retirement are the penalties for late enrollment.

Some insurance companies mask cost by having a large deductible. The deductible amount is something some people do not pay attention to when they sign-up for a policy and are later shocked by large bills.

An aging population, chronic disease, and provider shortages in some areas also impact costs. Chronic disease affects one in five Americans – enough so that some plans have special rates for some chronic diseases. Mr. Johnson noted that there are some Medicaid funds available that are little known and underutilized.

Ebony Capshaw, a pharmacy tech with Kroger, and Derrick tag-teamed on telling us about prescription costs. Prescription coverage can change radically from year to year with the same insurance company. At the end of the year the insurance company looks at what they spent money on in the previous year and adjusts both what



they cover (the formulary) and the amount of the premiums. If possible, people should shop around every year for more affordable prescription coverage. And even within the same plan different pharmacies might have different prices. Other cost reduction ideas are to ask providers for 90 day prescriptions for on-going medications or using generics rather than name brand.

Another way to reduce prescription costs is by using prescription discount cards, such as GoodRx or pharmacy systems' own in-house cards. People can look online for the drug/strength/quantity on the discount card sites and find the pharmacy with the best price. Sometimes even subtle changes make a big difference, such as tablets vs. capsules. People can talk with their doctors about prescription options to reduce their drug costs.

Ebony has seen an increase in people coming to the pharmacy without insurance recently. For some people this is an ugly surprise. TennCare recently dropped prescription coverage and many people don't know they don't have coverage until they go to the pharmacy.

Derrick Johnson, an Oak Ridge native and local licensed insurance broker will be our guest speaker. He grew up in Oak Ridge, graduated from the Oak Ridge school system, and went on to attend MTSU. There, he graduated with a degree in Business Marketing Office Management. After moving back to the Knoxville area, Derrick started his career in healthcare in 2005 with the then Covenant Health owned Cariten Health. He was bought in to help teach and instruct the call center reps about the Medicare Part D that was being implemented in 2006, and continued to assist and train the call center representatives throughout the Cariten acquisition by Humana. In 2009, he moved to the Knoxville Humana Guidance Center as an Integrated Specialist – providing community outreach for various programs and face-to-face support for Humana members, providers, and department management. Derrick used that experience to springboard to a Career Agent position with Humana, and then into an Independent Broker role with Baldwin Group.

Ebony Capshaw is an Oak Ridge native and Anderson County Commissioner. She is a 2025 Girls Inc. of Oak Ridge Bold Award winner, Leadership TN Next Class IX graduate and 2024 Emerge America Signature Bootcamp graduate. She has experience in many roles focusing on policies and procedures with application, inventory management, automation, and data management with CVS Health, Cardinal Health, and the University of Miami. She also serves as an advisor and training coordinator with local colleges' pharmacy students and Co-Operative Education high school students. Ebony also serves on the Free Medical Clinic of Oak Ridge Board of Directors, Anderson County Democratic Women's Club Executive Board, RAM Clinic volunteer, TCCA Emergency Services committee, Youth Leader at Greater Warner Tabernacle AME Zion Church, and East TN Regional Medical Reserve Corps volunteer. She has previously served in many roles such as TNDP State Executive Committeewoman, Child Advocacy Center of Anderson County, TN Board of Directors, Roane State Community College Pharmacy Technician Program Advisory Board member, 2nd Vice President for the Knoxville NAACP, TN State Conference NAACP Executive Committee Member-At-Large, and ran as a 2018 Anderson County Trustee candidate.

---

### **Contact the ACDWC**

**President:** Ann Mostoller [amostoller@msw-law.com](mailto:amostoller@msw-law.com)

**Vice President:** Ebony Capshaw [ebonymcapshaw@hotmail.com](mailto:ebonymcapshaw@hotmail.com)

**Treasurer:** Amy Dunkirk [adunkirk1234@gmail.com](mailto:adunkirk1234@gmail.com)

**Secretary:** Ann Miller [amiller.ixd@gmail.com](mailto:amiller.ixd@gmail.com)

**Nominating:** Tiffany Malone [tiffanymalone09@gmail.com](mailto:tiffanymalone09@gmail.com)

**EMERGE Liaison:** Ebony Capshaw [ebonymcapshaw@hotmail.com](mailto:ebonymcapshaw@hotmail.com)

**Hospitality:** Amanda Mantooth [mantoothaj@gmail.com](mailto:mantoothaj@gmail.com)

**Club Website:** [acdwc.org](http://acdwc.org)